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WASHINGTON---The high flying Newark Eagles maintained the edge in the Negro National League first half pennant race this week by taking five straight games, including double wins over the New York Black Yankees and the New York Cubans.

With the race slated to end July 4th, the hottest battle in the league's history loomed as the Philadelphia Stars, only one game off the leaders' pace, and the Washington Homestead Grays, four games behind, both engage the Eagles in xxx crucial contests within the next ten days. The Grays and Eagles battle in a four-game series this week, while the Stars invade ~~xxxx~~ Newark for a twin bill Sunday.

In piling up five straight last week, the Eagles trounced the Grays, 16-2, Tuesday night, behind Leon Day, then Len Hocker and Carl Cole hurled the Birds to 6-5 and 11-0 victories over the Black Yankees, respectively. The Birds climaxed the week's victory streak by a double win over the hitherto third-place Cubans Sunday, 6-1, and 3-1, with ~~xxx~~ Rufus Lewis and Loy hurling brilliantly, and Lenny Pearson smashing a home run to pace the batting attack against four Cuban pitchers.

The Philly Stars took a twin bill from the lowly Yankees at Wilmington, Del., Tuesday night, ~~xxxx~~ 17-8 and 13-1, blanked the Yankees on Saturday night, 10-0, as Joe Fillmore hurled six-hit ~~xxx~~ ball, but divided a double bill with the Homestead Grays at Washington on Sunday.

The Grays nosed out the Stars, 9-8, in the first game then bowed, 7-2, in the seven-inning nightcap, as Barney Brown won his second straight from the NNL champions.

Double-duty Maccliffe's performance featured the Grays' win as the veteran catcher lived up to his nickname of "Double" by catching for eight innings, then relieving the Grays' hurler and finishing the game in the box. Howard Easterling was the batting star of the Grays.

The split enabled the Grays to move into third place over the Cubans who dropped ~~xxxx~~ two to the Eagles after previously after lost to the Baltimore Elite Giants, 4-3, at Baltimore, on Tuesday night.

The Elites, with two wins over the Black Yankees, also improved their standings, and with a sustained win streak could easily move into contention for the first half title as the last week nears.

Anyway, the week's results left the Eagles riding high but only by a narrow margin and every one of the first four clubs is within striking distance for the first half pennant as the July 4th date approaches. It is the tightest race the NNL has seen since 1939.